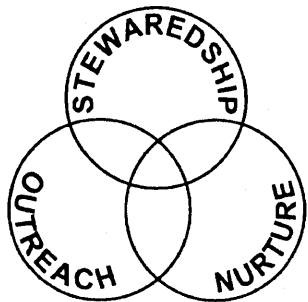


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St. Matthew's 25 Challenge

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Jesus said, "When you did it to one of these my brethren, you did it unto me." Matt. 25:40



Volume IV

SEPTEMBER 2004

Issue 9

SPIRITUAL OLYMPIANS

I want to thank you for your response to my recent sermon of the same title. Some thought that those who were not here or do not have access to the internet might benefit from the highlights.

Certainly, the United States is doing well in the Summer Olympics in Greece. The Olympics inspired the title, but the real inspiration came from the scripture reading from Hebrews 12:1 *"let us run with perseverance the race set before us,"* St. Paul uses several images from sports as metaphors for the Christian journey of faith. We know that becoming an Olympian is a great honor that is earned by the athletes who compete. Imagine all the people who participate in any particular sport. Then there are thousands who could actually be called athletes.

True athletes know and study everything they can about their sport. They are knowledgeable about the rules, techniques and strategy needed to be a winner in the sport. They condition themselves mentally, physically, and spiritually to be ready for anything that may be required of them. They also practice their skills constantly. Athletes put all of this to the test in actual competition with skillful opponents to refine their skills and win the prize.

Then there are Olympians. They are the best of the best. Imagine the thousands of athletes who competed for positions of their nations Olympic team and lost. Then consider the hundreds of Olympians who are eliminated at the Olympic games until only three medal winners remain; Gold, Silver and Bronze. Few people ever remember the non-medal winners.

I think Paul used the athletic metaphor to challenge us as Christians to understand that we are in a race against evil. If we are to win that race against evil we must run the race with perseverance that is set before each of us. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6: 12 *"For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but*

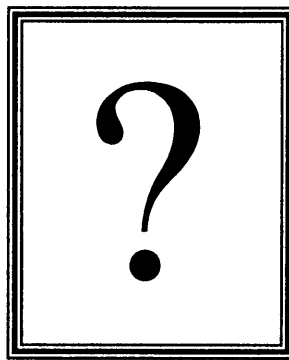
against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." God has set before each of us a race to run in this competition with evil and all that opposes the will of God. Being a Christian is not about us, as Rick Warren reminds us, as much as it is about God. As believers were are called to serve God. We are to compete on his behalf. Paul says, *"I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."* 1 Cor. 9:23-27

Continued on page 2

HOME COMING

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2004

11:00 A.M.



GUEST PREACHER

Homecoming is only a month away. Guess who is scheduled to be our guest preacher? After marriage our guest worked in South Carolina. They have one child and two grandchildren. They moved to Hope Mills

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1 SPIRITUAL OLYMPIANS

God desires that we share in the blessing of the Gospel and receive the imperishable reward of our faith. He expects us to find our purpose for living in him. (Find out more about this in Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life*.) God invites us to be a part of his plan. Are we ready to be a part of that plan? Have we prepared ourselves to be spiritual athletes to honor our God and savior? That is what discipleship is all about.

Discipleship requires the same thing of us a coach or a team expects of any athlete. True believers know and study everything they can about their faith. Disciples are knowledgeable about the rules, techniques and strategy of faith needed to be victorious in or faith. We condition ourselves mentally, physically, and spiritually to be ready for anything that may be required of us. We also practice faith skills constantly. Then we put all of this to the test in actual ministry to the world where people oppose. In this process refine our witnessing skills and win the prize.

Few of us will ever become spiritual Olympians, but we can all be spiritual athletes. We do not have to be young and physically strong, but we must be faithful and strong in the faith. Sadly, all too many church members look more like a booster club than God's team to actually accomplish something in the world. Too many church members sit in the stands and or on the sidelines but never get into the game of Christian discipleship. All too many church members play arm-chair quarterbacks and talk about what should have been done by those who are actually carrying out God's plans for his church.

Following the outstanding gold medal win of the US Women's Softball Team at the Olympics, the winning pitcher was asked what she would attribute to their amazing record. She said that the key to their win was the ability to turn individually great players into a real team. They actually trained with navy seal teams to learn the meaning of teamwork.

Unfortunately, many Christians still think Christianity is primarily about individual faith rather than teamwork. In reality God is the Christian franchise owner, Jesus is our head coach and the Holy Spirit is the defensive coach. God expects all Christian to be players not spectators. Non-Christians are the spectators and sometimes our opponents. God does not need cheerleaders, but players to carry out his plans for the church and the world.

Just as we know what it takes to be a serious athlete, deep down we know what it takes to be a disciple. Most church members have decided that it requires way too much and our church suffers the consequences. St. Paul said, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* II Tim. 4:7 Will we be able to say the same?

Shalom, Mike

Continued from page 1 HOMECOMING

and started working with the state.

They joined St. Matthew's when Rev. Thomas Loftis was pastor. They later became a lay speaker in the church. While Ruth Harper was pastor, they were asked to become a Lay Pastor at Parker's Grove UMC. They also served as Lay Pastor at Trinity UMC and filled the pulpit at Southview Presbyterian Church for about a year and a half. They retired from the NC Department of Corrections after a long career as a probation and parole officer. You have probably already guessed, Lloyd Willis. There was even a time Brenda and Lloyd served as youth counselors at St. Matthew's. And as many of you know Lloyd grew up in Hope Mills.

The question mark has another meaning. Recently, Lloyd has been having trouble with his left eye. He discovered he needed surgery for retinal re-attachment that is scheduled for September 8th. There is a possibility that his recovery may prevent him from preaching at our Homecoming. On the other hand he may be able to do it. I have told him that I will preach if he is unable to do so at the last minute. I assured him that we were most concerned that he put his health and vision first and that we will be praying for his recovery. We hope we will be able to hear from him on Homecoming. Plan to join us for this special day in the life of our church.

PRE-SCHOOL AND AFTER SCHOOL OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Our ministry design team has been studying requirements for this ministry and surveying programs in the area to learn what will be needed to move forward. We have some preliminary plans that will be discussed at our next Ministry Council Meeting. We have concluded that much of the preparations we need to make for this ministry are things we ought to do for our own children already here at St. Matthew's. Dr. Hale has received a grant through his non-profit faith based 501 (c) (3) ministry of \$8,000-\$10,000 a year which can be used to assist us in our outreach to the community. That is enough to cover part of the salary of a Program Director and Scholarships for children and families in need. The ministry is called



CHURCH IN SCHOOLS PROJECT

Our **One-By-One Ministry** has been in a partnership with J. W. Coon Elementary School for several years. Our Circles and United Methodist Women's ministries have helped in the school as well. This is a part of the Church In School Project of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

This year the United Methodist Women allocated \$200 for back to school needs at J. W. Coon and partnered with The PEACE ministry that added another \$600 to the project. The administrators, teachers, social worker and counselor have been identifying needs since school has started. St. Matthew's can be proud of our ministry in this school partnership.

Through a grant The PEACE is also able to provide a \$25 gift a month to nine different classroom teachers to buy some extras that are needed for the children. If we could raise another \$300 dollars we could make a gift to each classroom over the next nine months. If you would like to give to this partnership mark your check or envelope classroom and put it in the collection plate.

Faith In Action

Our partnership with the Department of Social Services we started under the name Families First continues its ministry under the name of Faith In Action. The ministry team went through training and is available to help families who are trying to move from welfare to work. We must admit that Bob and Adella Pray have done the vast majority of the work in this ministry. Others of us have been available to assist from time to time. This has been an extremely meaningful ministry which helps us fulfill **our vision for God's grace in Christ to transform our lives and Church through exciting, creative ministries that embody St. Matthew's 25 Challenge by faithfully serving the poor, hungry, naked, imprisoned, sick and strangers in our own community, as if ministering to Christ himself, for Jesus said, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me." Matthew 25:40**

MEETING & DINNER WITH NEW BISHOP AL GWINN

The Pastor, Chair of Church Ministry Council, Presidents of UMM and UMW, Lay Leader, Treasurer, Chairs of PPR, and Finance have been invited to attend a meeting and dinner with our new Bishop Al Gwinn on Wednesday October 23, 2004. The place will be announced later. Mark your calendar now.

UMCOR & Hurricanes 2004

We have been reading about the devastating Hurricanes and Tornados in Florida and elsewhere. Right here in the Fayetteville District across the street from Solid Rock United Methodist a tornado spawned by Tropical Storm Bonnie demolished the fellowship hall and damaged the sanctuary of Spout Springs Presbyterian Church. This was one of nine buildings destroyed and twenty-three sustained major damage.

Because of our giving through the apportionment the United Methodist Commission on Relief (UMCOR) is able to respond and 100% of the donations go to help others with no administrative cost deducted. It is good to know that within hours after a disaster UMCOR is responding to human needs.

If you would like to make a contribution to this cause simply mark your check or envelope Hurricanes 2004. Thanks in advance for your generous support.

CHARGE CONFERENCE WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2004

The District Superintendent, Rev. David Malloy, will be leading us at Charge Conference at 6:30 pm, Wednesday, October 27, 2004. As usual, we will be holding the necessary meetings of ministry teams to prepare reports for this meeting. A great deal of work and effort will go into our preparations. After four years of effort of the part of Doris and Dr. Hale our membership rolls are almost at a point of meeting a Membership Audit. We have cleared the rolls of nearly 200 inactive members so far.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 - Dorothy Taylor | 17 - Ruby Lucas |
| 6 - Joann Terrier
Matt Unruh | 18 - Lyle Spidle
Laura Gallimore |
| 7 - Shawn Schultz | 20 - Bob Lambert |
| 10 - Skeeter Parker | 21 - Julia Agnew |
| 11 - Kay Warbis | 22 - Betty Zielinski |
| 14 - Phyllis Jordan
Dustin Powell | 24 - Pam Gallimore
Sam Hubbard |
| 15 - Karen Ogden
Melvin Lynn | 28 - Kristine Lewis |
| 16 - Dr. Michael Hale | 30 - Amanda Jones
Jerry Brown |



The UMM met August 15th at 8:30 a.m. There were **21** men present. Breakfast was served by Randy and Troy which consisted of Bacon, Eggs, Biscuits and Potatoes.

The Devotion was presented by Calvin and was taken from *1 Peter 4: 1-11* and *Proverbs 12: 16*. Do you say what is on your mind? You may be missing something. Think what you are about to say before you speak. Be patient and slow to anger. You are known by the company you keep and the words you use.

Our **Church Family Picnic** has been rescheduled for September 25th from 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. at **Lake Rim Park**. Games and Fellowship will begin at 2:00 p.m. and Food will be served at 5:00 p.m. Mark your calendar!

Lynwood spoke to the men about the Rental Property at 201 and 203 Eucalyptus Road. Charles Lucas, Ike Huffman and Doug Stone cleaned the lawns and hauled truck & trailer loads of trash to the landfill. These men worked for three days to complete this task and deserve a special thanks for their efforts.

It was suggested that the large sign be moved if there was nothing to be announced. Jack, Raymond, James and Lucas moved it on Friday. It will return in time to announce the **UMM Barbecue Sale & Bazaar**. **Charles Lucas** was selected Chairman for this years Barbecue Sale. Tickets have been printed and are being distributed. The date for this event is **October 15th from 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.** The cost is only **\$5.00** per plate.

A committee was formed to select New Officers for 2005. They will be announced in October, voted on in November, and will take office in January.

Troy Willoughby, Secretary UMM

SPECIAL OFFERINGS WERE GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING FROM:

ARP FUND

- ◆ Wayne & Elaine Everts
- ◆ Perry Smith IMO Sally Merritt

CHURCH POWER BILL

- ◆ The Thrift Shop

EMERGENCY FUND

- ◆ Wayne & Elaine Everts
- ◆ Ruth-Ethel Smith Circle
- ◆ Paul & Jewel Sharpe
- ◆ The Thrift Shop
- ◆ Peggy Pullman Class
- ◆ James & Joyce DeBruhl
- ◆ Sunday Morning Bible Study Class
- ◆ Sandy Jones

MEMORIAL FUND

- ◆ St. Matthew's UMC IMO Sally Merritt
- ◆ Geral & Cheryl Merritt IMO Sally Merritt
- ◆ James & Paula Smith IMO Sally Merritt

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

- ◆ Wayne & Elaine Everts

YOUTH PILGRIMAGE

- ◆ Amy-Jo Everts

SEPTEMBER FLOWER CHART

- 5 - In memory of Genevieve Zielinski by Hank & Betty Zielinski
- 12 - In honor of Ruby Lucas by Charles
- 19 - In honor of Sam Hubbard's Birthday & Anniversary by the girls
- 26 - None

The following dates are available if you would like to place flowers in the church. The cost is only \$20.00. Make your check out to St. Matthew's UMC and put flowers in the memo section.

DATES AVAILABLE:

- September 26
- October 31
- November 14





UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Four months remain to accomplish the UMW goals for 2004. Please be in prayer for our church and its people. Bazaar time is at hand. Start "cleaning out" those closets, garages, attics, etc. for our White Elephant/ Almost New Room. The FFF will have soup for sale on Saturday. Lola has agreed to be Chairperson for the Bazaar, so please offer to help her. Sign up for working at the Bazaar will be done at your September Circle

Meetings. Please also remember to support the United Methodist Men in their annual Barbecue Sale on Friday.

Adella Pray, UMW President

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Sept. 13 - UMW General Mtg.

Oct. 15 - UMW Bazaar & UMM Barbecue

Oct. 4 - UMW General Mtg.

Oct. 16 - UMW Bazaar

Oct. 14 - Set Up For Bazaar

Nov. - Shoe Box Ministry

During the month of July, the Thrift Shop contributed to the following:

- * Clothes for four families
- * Stamps for the Card Ministry
- * Nine Scholarships for children to attend St. Matthew's Day Camp
- * Jeff Anderson's Russian Mission Trip
- * St. Matthew's Emergency Fund

A special thanks to everyone who works to assist at the Thrift Shop in any way.

Mary Schneider, Chairperson

Lee Anna Sproul, Co-Chairperson



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

"BLUEBERRY STREUSEL COBBLER"

1 pint fresh or frozen blueberries	1 (14 oz) can Eagle Brand Sweet
2 tsp grated lemon peel	Condensed Milk (NOT evaporated)
3/4 cup plus 2 Tbs cold butter or margarine	2 cups biscuit baking mix, divided
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar	1/2 cup chopped nuts
Vanilla Ice Cream	Blueberry Sauce

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In bowl, combine blueberries, Eagle Brand and peel. In large bowl, cut 3/4 cup butter into 1 1/2 cups biscuit mix until crumbly; add blueberry mixture. Spread in greased 9-inch square baking pan. In small bowl, combine remaining 1/2 cup biscuit mix and sugar; cut in remaining 2 tablespoons butter until crumbly. Add nuts. Sprinkle over cobbler. Bake 1 hour and 10 minutes or until golden. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream and Blueberry Sauce. Refrigerate leftovers. Makes 8 to 12 servings.



BLUEBERRY SAUCE: In saucepan, combine 1/2 cup sugar, 1 tablespoon cornstarch, 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon and 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg. Gradually add 1/2 cup water. Cook and stir until thickened. Stir in 1 pint blueberries; cook and stir until hot.

SEPTEMBER ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & B.Study-6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:30pm	2	3	4
5	6 LABOR DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	7 Prayer Group – 6:30pm	8 Ruth-Ethel Smith Circle – 11:00am Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & B.Study-6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:30pm	9 Night Owl Circle – 7:00pm	10	11 FFF – 10:00am
12	13 UMW General Mtg. – 6:30pm	14 Prayer Group – 6:30pm	15 Home Extensions-9:30am Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & B.Study-6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:30pm	16	17	18 Pastor's Mtg – 9:00am-12:00pm in F.H.
19 UMM Breakfast Mtg. – 8:30am	20 Pre & After School Ministry Design Team Mtg. – 6:00pm	21 Prayer Group – 6:30pm	22 Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & B.Study-6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:30pm	23 Help'N Hands – 11:00am	24	25 Book Club Pizza Palace-11:30am CHURCH FALL PICNIC Lake Rim Park 2:00-6:00pm
26 Donation Breakfast Sponsored by Youth HOMECOMING Lloyd Willis 11:00 AM	27	28 Prayer Group – 6:30pm	29 Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & B.Study-6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:30pm	30		